

NORTH ALASKA PENINSULA SALMON
MANAGEMENT PLAN, 1997

By

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INTRODUCTION

The North Peninsula is a portion of the Alaska Peninsula Salmon Management Area. The North Peninsula consists of the Northern and Northwestern Districts, and encompasses Bering Sea coastal waters from Cape Menshikof west to Cape Sarichef. The Northern District includes all waters between the westernmost tip of Cape Menshikof and the southernmost tip of Moffet Point, while the Northwestern District includes all waters between Moffet Point and Cape Sarichef light on Unimak Island (Figure 1).

The Cinder River Section, Inner Port Heiden Section, and Ilnik Lagoon comprise an overlap area described under 5 AAC 39.120 (d) in the 1996-97 regulation book on page 35. Area M permit holders may fish anytime during open fishing periods during the open season in all of the above locations. Area T permit holders may fish in Ilnik Lagoon during August 1 through September 30, and may also fish in the Inner Port Heiden and Cinder River Sections during May 1 through June 30, and during August 1 through September 30 during open fishing periods during the open season.

The projected 1997 sockeye catch is approximately 2.3 million salmon for the entire North Peninsula. The bulk of the projected 1997 harvest is expected to be taken from Harbor Point to Stroganof Point and in the Nelson Lagoon fisheries. The 1997 harvest projection for species other than sockeye salmon are: 15,000 chinook salmon, 180,000 coho salmon, 5,000 pink salmon, and 200,000 chum salmon.

The purpose of this document is to provide commercial fishermen and buyers with the pertinent information and guidelines that will be used to manage the commercial salmon fisheries of the North Peninsula during 1997.

FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CATCH REPORTING

Inseason emergency orders and news releases will be made available to the industry and the public by at least one of the following methods:

1. Communicated directly to the local processors and fishers.
2. Transmitted over one or more of the following frequencies: SSB 3230, 3261, and 4125, and VHF 72 (Port Moller) or 6 (Cold Bay).

Buyers must report their salmon purchases by species (in both numbers of fish and pounds) and number of deliveries by 10:00 a.m. the day following. Corresponding fish tickets must be sent to either of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game offices in Cold Bay or Port Moller within seven days of the harvest. That portion of the Northern District from Herendeen Bay to Stroganof Point will be managed from the Port Moller office, while the remainder of the North Peninsula will be managed from Cold Bay. Contact can be made over VHF 72 (Port Moller) or VHF 6 (Cold Bay). Buyers may also phone or fax their information to:

Port Moller:

Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game
P.O. Box 163
Port Moller, AK 99571-8999
phone (907) 987-2216
fax (907) 987-2215
VHF 72

Cold Bay:

Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game
P.O. Box 50
Cold Bay, AK 99571
phone (907) 532-2419
fax (907) 532-2470
VHF 6, SSB 4125

NORTH PENINSULA MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The North Peninsula salmon fisheries will be managed on the basis of catch-per-unit-effort indicators and relative abundance of fish as determined by escapement surveys and weir counts. Weekly fishing periods during the open season are listed in the 1996-97 Commercial Finfish Regulation book and depend on the day of the week that the opening occurs (Table 1).

The commercial fishing season in the Uria Bay Section will be delayed by emergency order until June 30.

Northwestern District

Dublin Bay Section. Chum salmon openings will follow the 1996-97 Commercial Finfish Regulation book, unless escapement objectives are not being met.

Uria Bay Section. Christianson Lagoon will be managed for sockeye salmon and Peterson Lagoon will be managed based on chum salmon abundance until September 1 when the Uria Bay Section will be managed based on coho salmon abundance.

Swanson Lagoon Section. Sockeye and chum salmon stocks will be managed from aerial escapement surveys until September when the section will be managed for local coho salmon.

Bechevin Bay Section. The Bechevin Bay Section will open concurrently with the Ikatan Bay Section (part of South Peninsula) during June. After June, the Bechevin Bay Section will be managed based on chum and pink salmon stocks.

Izembek-Moffet Bay Section. Chum salmon are the principal species found in this section until September, when coho salmon are the dominant species. Management decisions will be based on aerial escapement surveys and catch per unit effort data. If there is little or no market for chum salmon, and fishermen target sockeye producing systems, then management will be based on those systems.

Northern District

Nelson Lagoon Section. The sockeye salmon escapement goal for the Nelson River system is established at 100,000 - 150,000. Based on timing of sockeye escapements and a midpoint escapement goal of 125,000 sockeye, a schedule of periodic inseason escapement goals past Nelson (Sapsuk) River weir will be utilized. The escapement target may be increased above the listed goals if the escapement quality is poor due to a high percent of net marked fish or a poor sex ratio.

Nelson (Sapsuk) River Weir Sockeye Salmon Escapement Goals

Date	Mid-point Cumulative Goal
June 30	30,000
July 5	65,000
July 10	90,000
July 15	110,000
July 20	115,000
July 25	120,000
July 30	122,000
August 5	123,000
August 10	124,000
August 15	125,000
Season Total	100,000-150,000

Total daily harvest of sockeye salmon will also be used to evaluate run strength since travel time between the fishery and weir can be as long as 7 days. The Nelson Lagoon fishery will be managed based on interim escapement goals at the Nelson River weir, Nelson Lagoon commercial catches, and aerial surveys.

The number of jack sockeye salmon (age x.1) in the Nelson River system is an important consideration in evaluating run strength. If the number of jack salmon is excessively high (> 10%), as determined by the weir crew and from catch samples, the escapement goal may be raised to compensate for the imbalance.

To provide adequate protection for chinook stocks in Nelson Lagoon, fishing periods through June 15 are limited to 6:00 a.m. Monday to 12:00 midnight Wednesday. There will be four fishing days each week during June 16 - 30; additional time will be added if daily sockeye salmon catches substantially exceed the schedule, indicating a strong sockeye run. However, if it is evident before June 30 that the sockeye or chinook salmon runs are weak, then the number of fishing days will be reduced. The amount of chinook salmon gear used in the fishery will be taken into account when evaluating sockeye catches.

After June 30, fishing periods will be dependent upon sockeye escapement in relation to the escapement schedule and daily catch levels. If escapements past the Nelson River weir cannot be

determined, then daily catch rates (primarily) and daily catch per boat (secondarily) will be utilized to evaluate strength of the run and to establish appropriate fishing periods.

It is anticipated that no more than three fishing days per week will be allowed during the fall coho season in Nelson Lagoon unless the escapement is adequate to warrant additional fishing time.

Herendeen-Moller Bay Section. The Herendeen and Port Moller Bay fisheries will be managed for chum salmon stocks. Pink salmon that enter Herendeen Bay (especially during even years) will be harvested in fisheries by emergency order if abundance warrants without jeopardizing local chum salmon stocks. Due to changes in South Peninsula fishing areas, additional purse seine gear effort may occur within this section. Management decisions will be based on escapement, monitored by aerial surveys, and catch information.

Port Moller Bight Section. The Port Moller Bight Section, located near the processing plant at Port Moller, extends from a line from Entrance Point to Harbor Point. This area will be managed based on Bear River sockeye stocks.

Bear River and Three Hills Sections. The Bear River sockeye salmon escapement goal is divided into several segments to ensure that all stocks contributing to the Bear River runs receive adequate escapement. The Bear River season escapement goal is 200,000 - 250,000 sockeye salmon for all stocks combined. The upper escapement goals for all periods will be the target.

Bear River Sockeye Salmon Escapement Goals.

Date	Escapement for Period Ending	Cumulative Escapement Goal
Early-Run Component:		
June 15	2,000 - 5,000	2,000 - 5,000
June 20	3,000 - 10,000	5,000 - 15,000
June 25	10,000 - 25,000	15,000 - 40,000
June 30	25,000 - 40,000	40,000 - 80,000
July 5	20,000 - 40,000	80,000 - 100,000
July 10	10,000 - 20,000	100,000 - 110,000
July 15	10,000 - 15,000	110,000 - 125,000
July 16 - August 5 (Overlap)	40,000 - 50,000 ^a	150,000 - 175,000
Late-Run Component:		
Post August 5	50,000 - 75,000 ^b	200,000 - 250,000
Season Total		200,000 - 250,000

^a Escapement that occurs in excess of the upper interim escapement goal for the July 11-15 period (15,000 fish), will be applied to the July 16-August 5 escapement goal. However, no more than 20,000 fish shall be applied to the July 16-August 5 period. This will aid ADF&G in effective management of Bear River sockeye salmon runs when the run is earlier than expected.

- b Escapement occurring during the August 1-5 period that results in the total escapement to exceed the 50,000 fish upper escapement goal range for the July 16-August 5 period (40,000 to 50,000), will be applied to the late run escapement goal (post August 5). However, no more than 25,000 fish shall be applied to the post August 5 goal. This will aid ADF&G in managing the Bear River sockeye salmon runs more effectively when the run is earlier than expected.

If one of the above escapement targets is not achieved, the fishery will be curtailed to the extent necessary so that the overall escapement goal will be reached.

The number of jack sockeye salmon in the Bear River escapement is an important consideration. If the number of jack salmon (length < 400 mm mid eye to fork of tail or age x.1) is above 10%, as determined by the ADF&G weir crew, the escapement goal may be raised to compensate for the imbalance. Typically, the number of jack salmon is less than 10%.

The Sandy River sockeye salmon escapement goal is 20,000-30,000 using aerial surveys and 40,000-60,000 using weir counts. Each interim goal is shown for both aerial survey and weir counts. If weir counts are unavailable due to difficulties with the weir such as washout, aerial surveys will be used to manage the fisheries. Since 1994 was the first season that a weir was used for daily counts, the Sandy River interim escapement goals were determined from tower counts in the early 1960's and 1994-96 weir counts, and will be used as a guide for the 1996 season for obtaining a constant escapement throughout the entire run.

Sandy River Sockeye Salmon Escapement Goals

Date	Cumulative Weir Count	Cumulative Number Aerial Survey
June 15	2,000 - 3,000	1,000 - 1,500
June 30	8,000 - 12,000	4,000 - 6,000
July 4	20,000 - 30,000	10,000 - 15,000
July 8	30,000 - 44,000	15,000 - 22,000
July 13	36,000 - 54,000	18,000 - 27,000
July 25	40,000 - 60,000	20,000 - 30,000
Season Total	40,000 - 60,000	20,000 - 30,000

The Three Hills Section will be managed for Bear and Sandy River sockeye salmon. At times when escapement objectives in Bear or Sandy Rivers are not being met, a portion of the Bear River Section may be closed and the Three Hills Section may remain open. This strategy has been used successfully in the past and allows for the achievement of the escapement goal while providing fishing opportunity and avoiding escapement surplus. If escapement into Ilnik and/or Ocean River (if Ocean River flows directly into the Bering Sea) are lacking substantially and area closures in the Ilnik Section are not effective, the eastern portion of the Three Hills line may be moved to the west to provide for a larger closed water area.

Sockeye Salmon Stocks Used to Manage Four Sections in the Northern District

Section	Stocks	
	Pre-July 16	Post July 15
Bear R.	Bear R., Sandy R.	Bear R., Sandy R.
Three Hills	Bear R., Sandy R., Ilnik R.	Bear R., Sandy R.
Ilnik	Ilnik R., Bear R., Ugashik R.	Bear R., Ilnik R. ^b
Nelson Lagoon	Nelson R.	Nelson R.

^a Bear River and Ugashik River stocks will be considered only if management concern exists.

^b Ilnik River stocks will be managed when the run occurs after July 15.

During the chinook salmon run in June to the Bear and Sandy Rivers, management decisions regarding sockeye salmon may be conservative to protect local chinook stocks. In August and September, management actions in the Three Hills Section will be considered for the protection of Ilnik Lagoon coho salmon stocks.

Ilnik Section. The Ilnik Section (Figure 2), including the area outside of Ilnik Lagoon, will be managed prior to July 15 for Ilnik sockeye stocks. The majority of the Ilnik River run occurs prior to July 15, however, in some years escapement occurs up to July 20. Depending on run timing and escapement requirements, the Ilnik Section may be managed for Ilnik sockeye stocks to July 20. That portion of the Ilnik Section southwest of Unangashak Bluffs is scheduled to open by regulation on July 5, while the remainder of the Ilnik Section (excluding Ilnik Lagoon which opens May 1) northeast of Unangashak Bluffs to Stroganof Point opens by regulation on July 15. Management action based on Bear River sockeye will be considered in the Ilnik Section prior to July 15 if inseason run performance indicates that the Bear River run is not expected to meet escapement goals after closures in the Bear River and Three Hills Sections. Management action will also be taken in the Ilnik Section if management actions are taken in the Egegik District for Ugashik River sockeye stocks by moving the fleet to the Loran C Line 9990-Z-45110. If Bear and Ugashik Rivers sockeye runs are expected to meet escapement requirements, fishing time in the Ilnik Section will be based on abundance of Ilnik River sockeye stocks. Post-July 15 to about August 15, the Ilnik Section will be managed for Bear River sockeye stocks. However, if Ilnik, Bear or Ugashik Rivers runs are late, and run estimates do not meet escapement requirements, an extension past the July 15 to July 20 may be needed to ensure escapement.

Sockeye escapement goals for Ilnik River are provided for both methods of assessing escapement, weir counts and aerial surveys. The escapement goal utilizing weir enumeration is 40,000 - 60,000 salmon. The department will utilize weir counts in determining escapement and will only utilize aerial survey counts if weir counts are unavailable. The season escapement goal based on aerial survey counts are 20,000 - 30,000 salmon.

**Ilnik River Sockeye Salmon Escapement Goals
If Ocean River Flows Into Ilnik Lake**

Date	Cumulative Number	
	Weir Count	Aerial Survey
June 15	4,000 - 6,000	2,000 - 3,000
June 25	8,000 - 12,000	4,000 - 6,000
July 1	16,000 - 24,000	8,000 - 12,000
July 4	20,000 - 30,000	10,000 - 15,000
July 7	32,000 - 48,000	16,000 - 24,000
July 11	36,000 - 54,000	18,000 - 27,000
July 20	40,000 - 60,000	20,000 - 30,000
Season Total	40,000 - 60,000	20,000 - 30,000

If weir counts are unavailable, daily counts for those days which the weir was not used will be obtained by using Ilnik Lagoon commercial salmon harvest rates, aerial surveys, or pre-washout weir counts and post-washout counts, or a combination of these methods.

A sockeye salmon escapement goal for the Ocean River was derived from escapement surveys when the river flowed directly into the Bering Sea in 1972-75, 1986, and 1987 and not into Ilnik Lake. When this occurs, many of the fish into Ocean River do not pass through the Ilnik River, and therefore would not pass the weir. For the years noted above, an average of 20% of the escapement spawned in Ocean River. If Ocean River flows into the Bering Sea, the Ocean River escapement goal will be subtracted from the Ilnik escapement goal.

**Ocean River Sockeye Salmon Escapement Goals
(Only Needed If Ocean River Flows Directly Into the Bering Sea)**

Date	Cumulative Number
	Aerial Survey
June 15	400 - 600
June 25	800 - 1,200
July 1	1,600 - 2,400
July 4	2,000 - 3,000
July 7	3,200 - 4,800
July 11	3,600 - 5,400
July 20	4,000 - 6,000
Season Total	4,000 - 6,000

From about August 15 through September, the Ilnik Section will be managed based on Ilnik Lagoon coho salmon run strength. The strength of Unangashak and Ilnik River coho runs, effort levels, and distribution of effort will determine fishing time in the Ilnik Section.

Inner Port Heiden and Cinder River Sections. The Inner Port Heiden and Cinder River Sections will be managed on the basis of chinook stocks during May and June, sockeye stocks during July, and coho stocks after July. Area T permit holders may fish in the open waters of these sections during every month except July. Area M permit holders are allowed to fish in the open waters of these sections during May, June, July, August, and September. The fishing season in that portion of the Cinder River Section outside of Shagong (Cinder River Lagoon) is closed to commercial salmon fishing prior to August 1. Fishers fishing in the Cinder River Section are reminded that the following waters are closed to commercial salmon fishing under 5 AAC 09.350:

- 1) Cape Menshikof: all waters of the Cinder River Section located north of Loran C line 9990-Y-32920.

and,

- 2) Cinder River Lagoon: all waters enclosed by a line from 57°19'48" N. lat., 158°08'24" W. long., to 57°21'18" N. lat., 158°02'38" W. long.

Table 1. Scheduled North Peninsula fishing periods as described in the regulation book.

Section	Open Season	Fishing Period
Cinder River, outside Cinder River Lagoon.	August 1 - September 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday
Cinder River, inside Cinder River Lagoon	May 1 - September 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday
Outer Port Heiden	No open season	
Inner Port Heiden	May 1 - September 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday
Ilnik Section between Three Hills (159° 50') and Unangashak Bluffs, located at 159°10'48" and including Ilnik Lagoon and within the Seal Islands	July 5 - September 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday
Ilnik Section between Three Hills (159°50') Bluffs at 159°10'48") and Strogonof Point.	July 15 - September 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday
Ilnik Section inside Ilnik Lagoon and within the Seal Islands	May 1 - July 4	12:00 noon Monday to 11:59 p.m. Wednesday
Three Hills	June 25 - June 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday
Three Hills	July 1 - September 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Thursday
Bear River	May 1 - June 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday
Bear River	July 1 - September 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Thursday
Port Moller Bight	May 1 - September 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Thursday
Herendeen-Moller Bay	May 1 - July 20	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Thursday
Nelson Lagoon	May 1 - June 15	6:00 a.m. Monday to 12:00 midnight Wednesday
Nelson Lagoon	June 16 - August 15	6:00 a.m. Monday to 12:00 midnight Thursday
Nelson Lagoon	August 16 - September 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 12:00 midnight Wednesday
Caribou Flats	No open season	

-Continued-

Table 1. (page 2 of 2)

Section	Open Season	Fishing Period
Black Hills	May 1 - June 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Wednesday
	July 1 - September 30	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Thursday
Izembek-Moffet Bay	June 1 - August 10	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Thursday
Swanson Lagoon	June 1 - August 10	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Thursday
Urilia Bay ^a	June 30 - August 10	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Thursday
Dublin Bay	July 10 - August 10	6:00 a.m. Monday to 6:00 p.m. Thursday
Bechevin Bay	June 1 - September 30	By Emergency Order Only

^a In recent years the early portion of the Urilia Bay sockeye run has been overfished, with escapements being achieved during late June and July. Consequently, in 1997 the Urilia Bay Section will remain closed to commercial salmon fishing until Monday June 30 unless observed escapements justify an earlier opening.

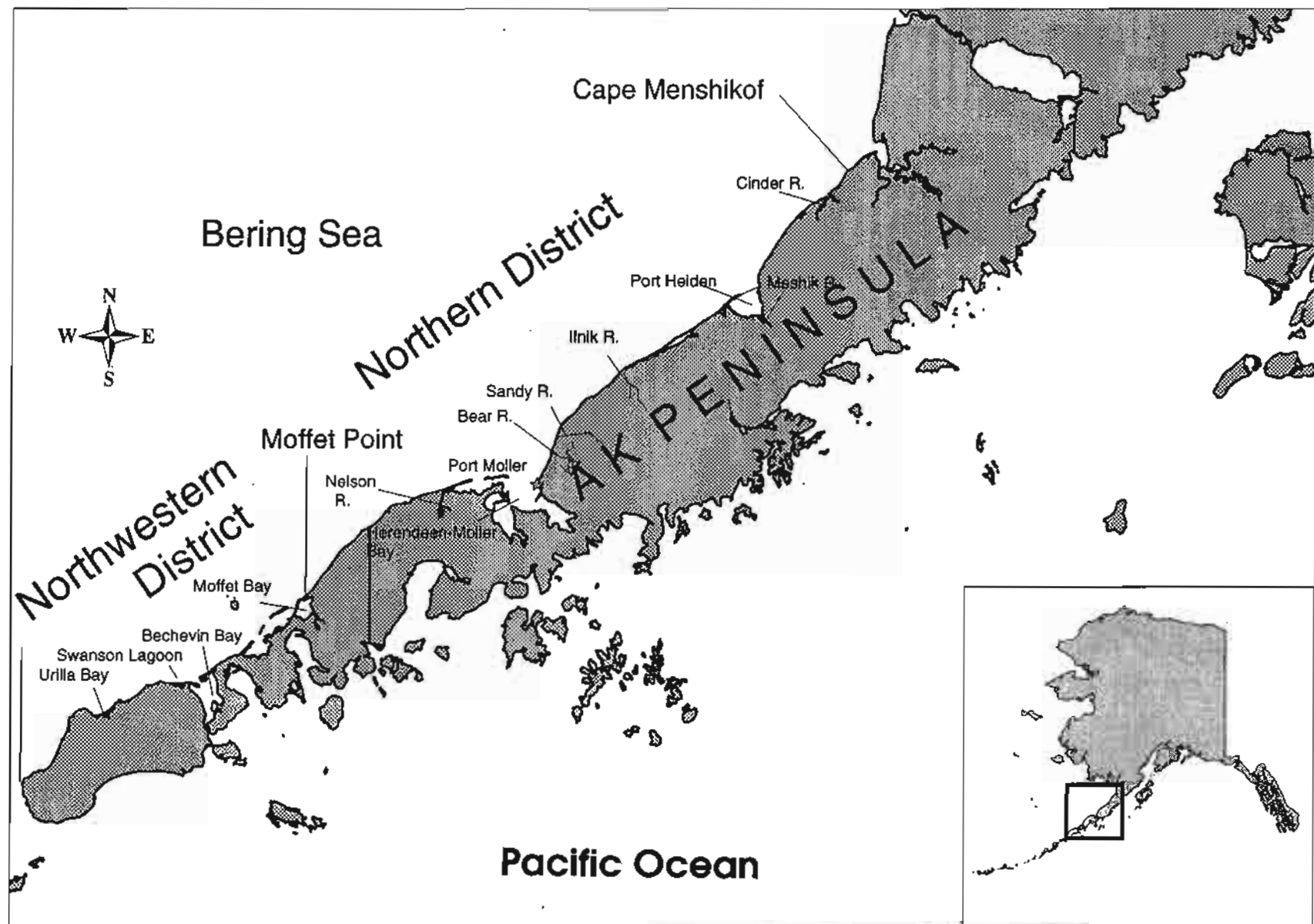


Figure 1. North and South Alaska Peninsula with North Peninsula districts depicted.

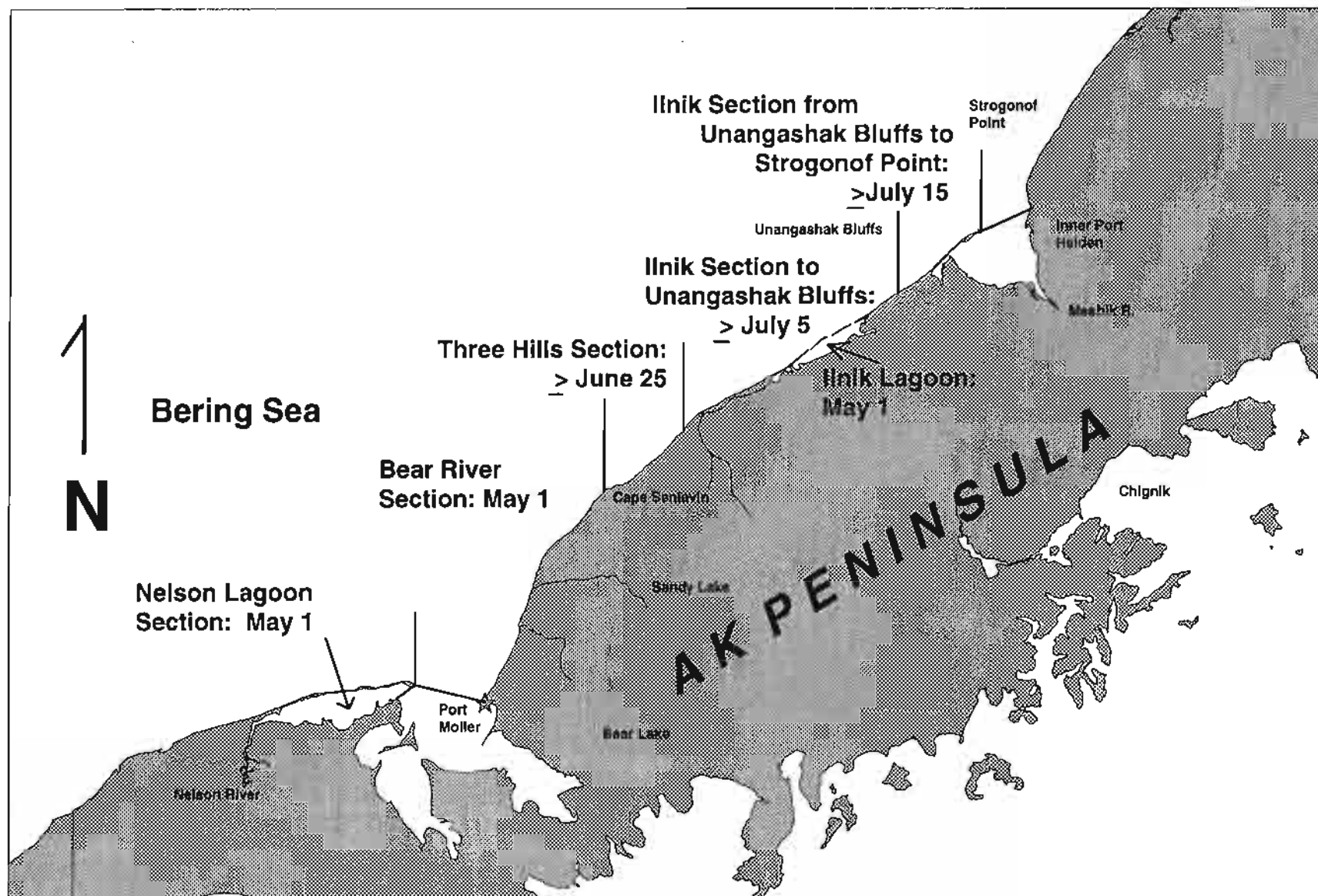


Figure 2. Nelson Lagoon to Strogonof Point reach, with district sections, commercial salmon season opening dates, and major sockeye salmon systems depicted.

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